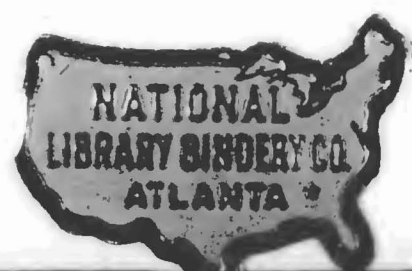




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History of
Harmony Baptist
Association
Since Organization

Comprising Parts of
LEVY, GILCHRIST AND
ALACHUA COUNTIES

Compiled by

I. S. C. Sheffield

W. S. Yearty

Graham Carter

W. H. Tucker

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History of Harmony Association Since Organization

On the 31st day of October, 1879, a convention of Brethren representing churches in Levy and Alachua Counties assembled at Pine Grove Baptist Church near Waccassassee post office Levy County for the purpose of organizing Harmony Association of Missionary Baptists. Elder Z. A. Crumpton preached the introductory sermon using Acts 17th chapter and 28th verse as a text, after the sermon they entered in to the work of organization and Elder W. N. Chedoin was elected Chairman and Hon. Ira J. Carter, clerk temporary. The articles and rules of decorum were subscribed to by all the Churches represented.

The churches represented and the delegates that were present were as follows:

Concord Otter Creek Post Office, S. H. Worthington, M. A. Beck, J. S. Oglesbee and J. B. Lamb.

Pine Grove Waccassassee Post Office, Simeon Sheffield, Jacob Dupree, J. K. Sheffield and N. T. King.

Corinth, Waccassassee Post Office, Charles Hedges, James E. Bonifield and E. L. Long.

Elizabeth, D. T. Trammell, R. L. Ricks, J. P. Faircloth, S. J. Collins and Martin Collins.

Franklin, F. W. Folk.

Jonesville, Thomas M. Kirby, J. E. Hunt and L. J. Knight.

Spring Grove, W. J. Martin and G. W. Fletcher.

Union, Leroy Wood and Ira Carter.

Simeon Sheffield was elected as Moderator for the ensuing year and Ira J. Carter Clerk.

Ministers of the Association at this time were as follows:

J. B. Lamb, Otter Creek.

W. J. Martin, Oldtown.

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Simeon Sheffield, Waccassassee.
James K. Sheffield, Waccassassee.
G. W. Fletcher, Oldtown Licensee.

The several Delegates from these churches traveled on horseback to Elam Church in Columbia County and met with Santa Fe River Association and requested letters of dismission from that body which were granted.

The first Missionary from Harmony Association was Simeon Sheffield who did local work in the Association organizing churches and preaching in different communities.

In 1885, James K. Sheffield was appointed Missionary to Lafayette County embracing that part known as Dixie County. He was paid a salary by the Association, as this was new territory with no churches and his duties were to organize and work up a religious sentiment among the people. He comenced by preaching from different homes and as enough joined they would meet, cut logs, rive out boards, hew puncheons or planks and erect churches.

There were men in this territory that had families that had never heard a sermon preached and on Sunday morning the women and children would go from their homes to the church with the horse and cart or the ox team and the men would take their guns and dogs and hunt deer. Sometimes during services there would be as many as five deer hanging up near the Church. The men would stack their guns and listen to the sermon, after services they would hunt back home.

This condition only lasted a short while, they soon left their guns at home and when they were converted they were sincere and developed the genuine old time religion.

From 1883 to 1885 Simeon Sheffield and W. J. Martin worked as Missionary Pastors on the east side of Suwannee River. In 1886 Simeon Sheffield was Missionary on the east side of Suwannee River and was to collect half salary on the field, the Association paid the other half. The Missionary work was suspended for a number of years after this.

Later the Association was served by, J. S. Geiger, S. W. Sheffield, Z. A. Crumpton, J. W.

Hilton and E. H. Ridenour., by part pay from the State Board. In 1921 W. C. Armstrong served as Missionary half time A. B. West in 1928.

Local Pastors who have served as Pastors since the organization:

Simeon Sheffield	D. F. Barry
J. H. Townsend	S. W. Smith
W. J. Martin	V. T. Johnson
John B. Lamb	J. E. Hodge
Peter A. McAllister	C. M. Brittan
N. T. King	J. H. Crosby
N. B. Plummer	H. M. King
J. C. Porter	Tom White
G. S. Ware	P. W. Corr
D. J. Stewart	C. D. Parkerson
J. R. Douglas	P. J. Carrin
A. V. Pickerin	W. E. Bilingsley
F. T. Jones	S. W. Sheffield
Thomas Hanson	Daivd Wilson
George W. Martin	Elias Turner
R. W. Jones	J. P. Abbott
E. D. Boywer	Peter Lancaster
Andrew Lynn	R. P. Miller
V. N. Johnson	J. W. Quincey
W. M. Davis	E. H. Newton
B. R. Mosley	Phate Johnson
S. S. Procter	J. L. Norris
J. W. Hilton	Z. F. Golden
C. J. Bruner	Ben J. Urton
Z. A. Crumpton	P. S. Morgan

And probably others whom we fail to recall or had no record of, not left off intentionally.

About 1890 this Association lost Mt. Horeb, Mt. Nebo and Pleasant, Hill, they going with the churches of Lafayette County to organize the Lafayette Association.

Defunct Churches: Levyville, Oak Hill, Liberty, Corinth, Mt. Pleasant, Mile Branch, Atseniota, Sardis, Rosewood, Judson, Shiloah, Elizabeth, Mt. Zion and Shell Mound. These churches have merged into present churches a few years ago then we lost High Springs and Oak Hill to Santa-Fe River Association.

Moderators since organization, Simeon

Sheffield, Norvel R. Carter, S. W. Sheffield, A. V. Pickrin, James K. Sheffield, H. S. Rogers, J. G. Osteen, I. S. C. Sheffield, Ira J. Carter, N. T. King and Graham Carter.

Clerks since organization: Ira J. Carter, W. J. Martin, D. W. George, J. P. Abbott, N. R. Carter, J. E. Hodge, W. P. Carter, S. C. Gause P. E. Adams and J. M. Everett.

Present Churches of this Association and their status:

CONCORD—Organized 1876, first Pastor Simeon Sheffield, first Deacon, J. B. Lamb, members when organized 12, present 30, present Pastor H. E. Chapin, present Deacon O. W. Cason, first Secretary M. A. Beck, present Secretary O. W. Cason.

EBENEZER—Organized 1860, first Pastor Paul Colson, first Deacon Brother Tucker, members when organized 14, present 70, present Pastor W. D. Barnes, present Deacons, W. P. Geiger, J. M. Wilkerson, first Clerk, Brother Tucker, present Clerk W. P. Geiger.

SUMNER—Organized 1921, first Pastor E. H. Rhidenour, first Deacons J. M. Wright, C. C. Smith, A. D. Williams, members when organized 21, present 64, present Pastor none, present Deacon J. M. Wright, first Clerk M. L. Studstill, present Clerk J. M. Wright.

OTTER CREEK—Organized 1902, first Pastor J. W. Quincey, first Deacon W. E. Yearty, members when organized 15, present 75, present Pastor H. E. Chapin, present Deacons W. S. Yearty, G. W. Phelps, first Secretary W. S. Yearty, present Secretary C. N. West.

FOREST GROVE—Organized 1888, first Pastor Z. A. Crumpton, first Deacons J. L. May, W. C. Bradley, J. K. Wilson, members when organized 17, present 156, present Pastor Grady Herndon, present Deacons W. E. Pogue, D. C. Jones, F. E. Carthon, A. C. Fowler, first Clerk L. W. Knight, present Clerk V. G. Howington.

HARDEETOWN—Organized 1920. (no record) first Deacon (no record) members when organized 18, present 50, present Pastor Bro. Stanley, present Deacons W. B. Harrison and E. B. Harrison, first Clerk Mrs. H. W. Arrington, present Clerk Mrs. H. W. Arrington.

BETHEL—Organized 1888, first Pastor W. J. Martin, first Deacons G. P. Smith, J. E. White, members when organized 14, present 196, present Pastor A. S. Jones, present Deacons, M. W. Douglas, W. H. Bush, J. R. Palmer, Marion Colson, first Clerk, J. T. Everett, present, J. T. Everett.

CEDAR KEY—Organized 1870, first Pastor Aron Geiger, first Deacons H. E. McLeod, John Wilson, members when organized 10, present 124, present Pastor J. F. Gable, present Deacons J. C. Hodges, J. F. Taylor, first Clerk E. A. McLeod, present Secretary George Wadley.

JONESVILLE—Organized 1867, first Pastor Simeon Sheffield, first Deacon Enoch Geiger, members when organized 10, present 138, present Pastor W. B. Hicks, present Deacons Tom Kirby, H. L. Hillard, Eugene Parker, Will Sullivan, William Sheffield, first Clerk J. M. Brown present Clerk Mrs. Will Sullivan.

CHIEFLAND—Organized 1914, first Pastor J. W. Griffin, first Deacons Graham Carter, Leroy Wood, A. D. Perryman, members when organized 20, present 151, present Pastor R. D. Bevis, present Deacons Graham Carter, B. A. Rodgers, W. S. Young, A. D. Williams, first Clerk L. L. Calloway, present Clerk, J. N. Wood

TRENTON—Organized 1884, first Pastor W. J. Martin, first Deacons W. H. Gay, Gilbert Gay, members when organized 25, present 109, present Pastor R. J. O'Briant, present Deacons W. D. Carlton, W. N. Johnson, Frank Williams, first Clerk C. T. Gay, present Clerk B. F. Williams.

PINE GROVE—Organized 1871, first Pastor Simeon Sheffield, first Deacon John B. Manlin, members when organized 18, present 310, present Pastor W. B. Hicks, present Deacons Walter McElroy, P. E. Adams, B. C. Adams, Judson McElroy, J. W. Hogans, Tom Swilley, W. B. McElroy, I. S. C. Sheffield, first Clerk J. K. Sheffield, present J. W. Sheffield.

NEWBERRY—Organized 1902, first Pastor J. B. Porter, first Deacons J. H. Tucker, D. G. Rowland, members when organized 20, present members 221, present Pastor H. H. Harwell, present Deacons W. H. Tucker, S. A.

Hussey, W. J. Hamilton, Brother Chapman, W. H. Holt, first Clerk D. N. Barry, present Clerk Mrs. S. A. Hussey.

PRISCILLA—Organized 1886, first Paston J. K. Sheffield, first Deacons W. M. Bryant, Green Jones, members when organized 20, present 124, present Pastor J. L. Yoemans, present Deacons, T. C. Bryan, R. R. Blitch, first Clerk J. L. Bryan, present Clerk, Wallace Blitch.

UNION—Organized 1927, first Pastor J. R. Douglas, first Deacons J. B. Snyder, T. O. Smith, members when organized 75, present 124, present Pastor W. H. Barnes, present Deacons J. B. Snyder, T. O. Smith, P. H. Smith. M. L. Langford, first Clerk Pearl Smith, present Clerk, Pearl Smith.

The Fifth Sunday Meetings of this Association when first adopted were known as the Harmony Sunday School Convention and Missionary Association and the sessions were Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the round table discussion was enjoyed by all. At times it looked like the Moderator would have to call for help when some of the old brethren disagreed on some subject, but order would be restored and the discussion continued until next morning when all would give way for some man more learned and he would give Bible references, then everyone would go away declaring a great time. One thing that your committee wish to mention here is the scarcity of sweet potato pone and custard that was carried to the grounds and that was enjoyed by everyone at that time, we know they are considered out of style now but they are good and we recommend more of them in the future.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY WORK

This work was first organized in this Association in about 1889 by Mrs. M. A. Tucker, assisted by Mrs. J. T. Mendith, and they a noble work with the limited means that they had at that time, Mrs. Tucker and Mrs. Mendith were the first Presidents of this work. Mrs. Tucker first, in 1906, Mrs. M. O. Swilley was elected Vice-President or presiding officer

and later she was elected as the first W. M. U. President and by her untiring efforts she laid the foundation for the W. M. U. as it is with us at the present time. -Mrs. S. P. Getsen was Mrs. Swilley's successor, and with her spirited zeal she has brought the W. M. S. to its present standard. Mrs. Bertha Green also was elected and served for awhile as President and made a wonderful report of her work at a session of the Association we observe that in churches where there is a live working W. M. U. that we find a live church for truly God's greatest creation was good women and their prayers and earnest endeavors help to carry on in every land and country. We find from the records that Brother Forest Jones of Cedar Key was elected first President of the B. Y. P. U. in this Association and Reverend W. C. Armstrong was the leader in organizing this work. It has had wonderful growth and accomplished much good among the young church workers teaching them to become leaders with a greater understanding of the work and knowing how to address an audience without being backward and using the proper language and being able to send God's message to the people in a more forceful manner than we, the older ones, who have not had the training.

Your committee find from the records that it was by the untiring efforts and zeal of this Brother Simeon Sheffield assisted by Reverend W. J. Martin, N. T. King and other zealous Christians that Harmony Association was organized.

We, your committee, wish to thank Sister H. S. Rodgers for the assistance she has rendered us in our labor. She has a copy of the minutes of every meeting of the Harmony Association since it was organized and we request that she be presented with a copy of this report free. We wish to state that there may be some errors in this as the information gathered was from others and not all from the records as it was impossible to secure all from records but we believe that this is as near correct history of the Association as can be gathered without a great deal of time.

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We have an appendix or a short history of Pine Grove Church which we wish to read as we all term Pine Grove the Mother of the Association.

Respectfully submitted,
W. S. YEARTY,
I. S. C. SHEFFIELD,
GRAHAM CARTER,
W. H. TUCKER,
Committee.

In February of 1867 Reverend Simeon Sheffield, settled in the Waccassassee settlement at which is now Judson in Levy County, there were a few people living there at that time Mrs. Hagan, James Colson, Mrs. Mary A. Love, Jack Gillitt, Mrs. Bonie, Mrs. East Colson. Rev. ed there the 14th day of February, 1867. Reverend Sheffield and family spent the first night with Mrs. Colson, in the following March Mrs. Hagan gave a rail splitting and quilting as was the custom of that time they were expecting a dance that night but instead they decided to have preaching as there was a Preacher living among them, so they sent a delegation after the Preacher. In due time he arrived and the text that he used was the words of Peter where he said to Cornelius "With what intent did you send for me." With this meeting there was established a regular appointment for the following third Sunday in each month and Saturday before. They held services in the oak groves in fair weather and in private homes when it was raining. In the spring of 1871 the people gathered and built the first Church house of this part of the country, of pine logs and used boards which they split from trees for covering and the Reverend Kinsey Chambers came from Live Oak, Florida to assist in constituting this church and on the 11th day of July 1871 eighteen members came with letters from Ebaneezer church and Pine Grove Baptist Church was duly organized and constituted with three male members and fifteen female.